

ACCOU NT  
OF SOME  
L E N T  
AND OTHER  
Extraordinary Processions  
AND  
ECCLESIASTICAL ENTERTAINMENTS.

Seen at LISBON.

In FOUR LETTERS to an *English* Friend.

With a PREFACE, shewing the Reasons of its  
present Re-publication, on Account of the  
Increase of POPERY amongst us.

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By GEORGE WHITEFIELD, M.A.  
Late of PEMBROKE COLLEGE, OXFORD;  
And Chaplain to the Right Honourable the Countess of  
HUNTINGDON.

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T H E

## P R E F A C E.

THE following LETTERS were written about thirteen Years ago, whilst I was detained at Lisbon in my Voyage to Georgia. During the intermediate Time they have undergone several Impressions, and are now reprinted at the Request of some, who wish well to the Protestant Interest.

As the Expulsion of the Jesuits out of France and Spain hath been, is, and probably will be a means of increasing Property here in England, it highly becomes the Ministers and Stewards of the Mysteries of GOD, to ascend and stand upon their Watch-Tower. For to speak the Truth, it is only whilst we sleep that our Enemies can sow their popish Tares. Our

civil Governors have set us an Example: By their express order, our Ecclesiastical Rulers and Guides are now making a strict Enquiry into the Number of Roman Catholics within this Kingdom. The Event may be easily conjectured; it will help to discover Papists, but not Popery. Ever since the glorious Revolution (thanks be to God for such an unspeakable Mercy) she has been constrained to wear a Veil within these Realms, or at least to appear only in Dishabille. But would we behold her in her true and proper Attire, with all the Apparatus of superstitious Ostentation, we must follow her to those Countries where she is not only permitted, but even courted to walk abroad in her full and gorgeous Dress, undisguis'd and uncontrol'd. What kind of Dress that is, Courteous Reader, thou mayest see, in some measure, in the following Letters. Whether painted in Colours sufficiently strong, I shall not take upon me to determine. I can only assure thee they are true Ones; so true, and at the same Time so melancholy striking, that if the lively Oracles of God had not foretold us that it should be so, and, if the same

same unerring Oracles had not so expressly declared, that the Heart of Man is desperately wicked, and deceitful above all Things, no one could possibly conceive, how the pure, plain, simple, and yet divine Religion of the lowly humble JESUS, could be so miserably adulterated, or by any means degenerate into such a Sink of Corruption and more than Pagan superstitious Trumpery.

O Protestants ! Protestants ! How can you be sufficiently thankful for the precious Privileges you enjoy ! Praise the Lord, O our Souls ! But whilst we are thus employed in praising GOD's holy Name, let us not fail to implore Him with all his other Mercies graciously to vouchsafe us the Influences of his Almighty Spirit, in order to discover and subdue all the various Species of spiritual Antichrist out of every Protestant as well as Popish Heart. For eternal Truth hath said, and eternal Truth will stand by its own Declarations, that without Holiness, Holiness in Heart, Lip and Life, without a universal Morality, founded upon and proceeding from a true and lively Faith in the all-atoning Blood and Righteousness of JESUS CHRIST, no Man living, whether

Protestant or Papist, shall or can see, so as finally to enjoy the L O R D .

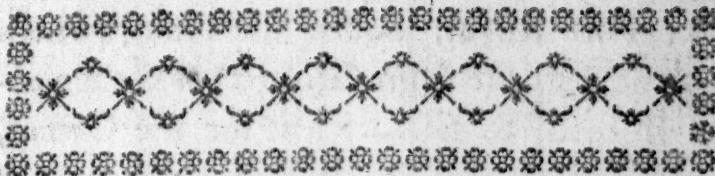
Man indeed may describe and make Remarks on all kinds of Idolatry from without; but the all-powerful Spirit of the God-man, C H R I S T J E S U S , alone can lead us into the inner Chambers of Imagery, and give us a spiritual View of, and a spiritual Conquest over, the greater and greater Abominations that lie latent and undiscerned in all unregenerate Souls. That both Ministers and People, of whatever Denomination, may be stirred up by the same almighty Spirit to recommend and apply, at all Times and in all Places, this universal Panacea, this grand, this only effectual, infallible, saving Catholicon, not only for Protestants or Papists, but for every Individual of Adam's fallen Race, is and shall be the continual Prayer of, my dear Reader,

Thy willing Servant,

for Christ's Sake,

LONDON,  
Nov. 25, 1767.

G. W.



# LETTER I.

LISBON, March, 1754.

My dear Friend,

Y this time, I suppose, you have heard of my having been at Lisbon, and are wondering what led me thither, especially since my last informed you of my Intention to go to Georgia by way of New-York. This was really my Design at the Time of my writing; but being afterward called by Providence to take with me several Orphan-children, I thought it most adviseable to go and settle them, and my other domestic Affairs at the Orphan-house first; that I might visit the northern Parts of America with more Ease and Freedom

Freedom in my own Mind.—It happened that the Success, Captain Thomson, bound for Port Royal, South Carolina, (which is not very far from Georgia) was then almost ready to sail.—I sent for the Owner, and finding that the Ship was to touch at Lisbon to unload some Wheat, it occasioned a little Demur: but, upon second Thoughts, believing it might be serviceable to me, as a Preacher and Protestant, to see something of the Superstitions of the Church of Rome, I took my Passage, and embarked in the Success the 7th of March.

—On the 14th we reached Cape Finister.

—On the 15th came in sight of the Burlings; and on the 16th anchored safe before Bellem, about four Miles distance from Lisbon City, the Metropolis of Portugal.—As I knew no body there, and had formed but an indifferent Idea of the Inhabitants, from the Account that had been given me of them, I had purposed within myself to keep on board, and go ashore only now and then in the Day-time.

—But Providence so ordered it, that a Gentleman of the Factory, who had heard me himself, and whose Brother had been awakened under my Ministry several Years

ago,

ago, immediately upon hearing of my Arrival, sent me an Offer of his House during my Stay.—I thankfully accepted it ; and special Leave being procured for my going ashore, I was carried in a Chaise and Pair from Bellem to Lisbon.—A new Scene, both in respect to the Situation of the Place, the Fashion of the Buildings, and the Dress of the Inhabitants, presented itself all the Way.—But what engaged my Attention most, was the Frequency of Crucifixes and little Images of the Virgin Mary, and other real or reputed Saints, which were placed almost in every Street, or fixed against the Walls of the Houses almost at every Turning, with Lamps hanging before them.—To these I observed the People bow as they passed along ; and near some of them stood several little Companies, singing with great Earnestness.—This seemed to me very odd, and gave me an Idea of what further Ecclesiastical Curiosities would probably fall in my way, if I should be detained any Time here.—These Expectations were quickly raised ; —For, not long after my Arrival at my new Lodgings, (where I was received and entertained with great Gentility, Hospitality,

tality, and Friendliness) upon looking out of the Window, I saw a Company of Priests and Friars bearing lighted Wax-tapers, and attended by various sorts of People, some of which had Bags and Baskets of Victuals in their Hands, and others carried Provisions upon their Shoulders on Sticks between two. After these followed a mixed Multitude, singing with a very audible Voice, and addressing the Virgin Mary in their usual Strain, *Ora pro nobis.* In this manner they proceeded to the Prison, where all was deposited for the Use of the poor Persons confined therein.—But a far more pompous Proceßion of the like Nature (as a Stander-by informed me) passed by a few Days after.—In this there were near three hundred Franciscan Friars, many of whom (besides Porters hired for the Purpose) were loaded with a Variety of Food; and those who bore no Burden, carried either Ladles or Spoons in their Hands.—Sights of this Nature being quite a Novelty to me, I was fond of attending as many of them as I could. Two things concurred to make them more frequent at this Juncture, viz. the Season of Lent, and an excessive Drought, which threatened the

the total Destruction of the Fruits of the Earth — For the averting so great a Judgment, and for the imploring the much longed-for Blessing of Rain, daily Processions had been made from one Convent or another for a considerable Time. — One of these I saw. It was looked upon as a pretty grand one, being made up of the Carmelite Friars, the Parish Priests, and a great number of what they call the Brothers of the Order, who walked two by two in divers Habits, holding a long and very large lighted Wax-taper in their right Hands. — Amidst these was carried, upon eight or ten Mens Shoulders, a tall Image of the Virgin Mary, in a kind of Man's Attire; for I think she had a very fine white Wig on her Head, a (Dress she often appears in) and was much adorned with Jewels and glittering Stones. — At some Distance from the Lady, under a large Canopy of State, and supported likewise by six or eight Persons, came a Priest, holding in his Hand some noted Relick. After him followed several thousands of People, joining with the Friars in singing Eadem cantilenam, Ora pro nobis, all the way. Still Rain was denied, and still Processions

cessions were continued.—At length the Clouds began to gather, and the Mercury in the Barometer fell very much.—Then was brought out a wooden Image, which they say never failed.—It was the Figure of our Blessed Lord, clothed with purple Robes, and crowned with Thorns. I think they call him the **LORD OF THE PASSION**.—Upon his Shoulders he bore a large Cross, under the Weight of which he was represented as stooping, till his Body bent almost double. He was brought from the **Le Gras Convent** in very great Pomp, and placed in a large Cathedral Church.

Being on board at that time, I lost this Sight: But the subsequent Evening I beheld the **SEIGNEUR** fixed on an Eminence in a large Cathedral Church, near the Altar, surrounded with Wax-tapers of a prodigious Size.—He was attended by many Noblemen, and thousands of Spectators of all Ranks and Stations, who crowded from every Quarter, and, in their Turns, were admitted by the Guards to come within the Rails and perform their Devotions.—This they expressed by kneeling, and kissing the **SEIGNEUR's** Heel, by putting their left and right eye to it, and then touching

touching it with their Beads, which a Gentleman in waiting received from them, and then returned again. This Scene was repeated for three Days successively; and during all this Time the Church and Space before it was so thronged with Carriages and People, that there was scarce any passing. The Music on this Occasion was extremely soft, and the Church was illuminated in a very striking Manner. The third Day in the Forenoon it rained, and soon after the SEIGNEUR was conducted home in as great Splendor, and much greater Rejoicing, than when he was brought forth. As my Situation was very commodious, I saw the Whole; and afterwards went and heard Part of the Sermon, which was delivered before him in the Church to which the SEIGNEUR belonged. The Preacher was full of Action; and in some Part of his Discourse, (as one who understood Portuguese informed me) pointing to the Image, he said, "Now he is at Rest. He went out in Justice, but is returned in Mercy." And towards the Conclusion he called upon the People to join with him in an extempore Prayer. This they did with great Fervency, which

was expressed not only by repeating it aloud, but by beating their Breasts, and clapping their Cheeks, and weeping heartily. To complete the Solemnity, immediately after the Delivery of the Blessing, all on a sudden, from the Place near which the Image stood, there was heard a most soft and soothing Symphony of Music, which being ended, the Assembly broke up; and I returned to my Lodgings, not a little affected to see so many Thousands led away from the Simplicity of the Gospel, by such a Mixture of human Artifice and blind Superstition, of which indeed I could have formed no Idea; had I not been an Eye-witness of it myself. This Concern was still increased by what I heard from some of my fellow Passengers, who informed me, that about eleven one Night, after I came aboard, they not only heard a Friar preaching most fervently before the SEIGNEUR, but also saw several Companies of Penitents brought in, lashing and whipping themselves severely. How little unlike this to those who cut themselves with Knives and Lancets, and cried out from Morning till Night, O Baal, hear us? Methinks I hear you say, and had I been present, I should have wished

wished for the Spirit of an Elijah to —  
 Hush, my Friend; I am content to guess  
 at the rest till we meet. In the mean  
 while, let us meditate on Him who said to  
 his Disciples, when they wanted to call for  
 Fire from Heaven, Ye know not what  
 Spirit ye are of; and let us comfort our-  
 selves with this Thought, that there is a  
 Season approaching, when the Lord God  
 of Elijah will himself come, and destroy  
 this and every other Species of Antichrist,  
 by the Breath of his Mouth, and the Bright-  
 ness of his Appearing, even by the all-con-  
 quering Manifestations of his eternal Spirit.  
 Whether as Men, Christians, and Pro-  
 testants, we have not more and more Rea-  
 son to pray Night and Day for the hasten-  
 ing on of that glorious and long wished for  
 Period, you will be better able to judge,  
 when I send you (as I purpose to do, if I  
 have Time) a farther Account of a Lent  
 Procession or two, of which I was also a  
 Spectator. At present I can only beg a  
 continued Remembrance at the Throne of  
 Grace, as being, my dear Friend,

Yours most respectfully  
 In our common LORD.

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## LETTER II.

LISBON, March, 1754.

My dear Friend,

THOUGH some other Business demands my Attention, yet I must not forget the Promise made you of a further Account of the Processions I saw at Lisbon. Some of those already mentioned were extraordinary, by reason of their great Drought; but that which is to be the Subject of my present Letter was an annual one; it being always customary at Lisbon to exhibit some Procession or another every Friday in Lent. An intelligent Protestant, who stood near me, was so good as to be my Interpreter of the Dumb Shew as it passed along. I say, Dumb Shew; for you must know it was chiefly made up of waxen or wooden Images, and carried on Mens Shoulders through the Streets, intending

to

to represent the Life and Death of St Francis, the Founder of one of their religious Orders. They were brought out from the Franciscan Convent, and were preceded by three Persons in scarlet Habits with Baskets in their Hands, in which they received the Alms of the Spectators, for the Benefit of the poor Prisoners. After these, came two little Boys in party-coloured Clothes, with Wings fixed on their Shoulders, in Imitation of little Angels. Then appeared the Figure of St Francis, very gay and Beau-like, as he used to be before his Conversion. In the next, he was introduced under Conviction, and consequently stript of his Finery. Soon after this was exhibited an Image of our Blessed Lord himself, in a purple Gown with long black Hair, with St Francis lying before him, to receive his immediate Orders. Then came the Virgin Mother, (horresco referens) with Christ her Son at her left Hand, and St Francis making his Obeisance to both. Here, if I remember aright, he made his first Appearance in his Friar's Habit, with his Hair cut short, but not as yet shaved in the Crown of his Head. After a little

Space followed a mitred Cardinal, gaudily attired, and before him lay St Francis almost prostrate, in order to be confirmed in his Office. Soon after this he appears quite metamorphosed into a Monk, his Crown shorn, his Habit black, and his Loins girt with a knotted Cord. Here he prays to our Saviour hanging on a Cross, that the Marks of the Wounds in the Hands, Feet, and Side, might be impressed on the same Parts of his Body. The Prayer is granted ; Blood comes from his Hands, Feet, and Side ; and the Saint with great Devotion receives the Impressions. This was represented by red waxen Strings, reaching from those Parts of the Image to the corresponding Parts of St Francis's Body. Upon this he begins to do Wonders ; and therefore in a little while he was carried along, holding up a House which was just falling. This Miracle they say was performed (if my Information be true) at Madrid, but the Particulars of its History I have forgotten. At length the Father dies, and is brought forth lying in his Grave. But lo ! the Briars and Nettles under which he lay, are turned into fine and

and fragrant Flowers. After this he is born along upon a Bier covered with a Silver Pall, and four Friars lamenting over him. He then appears for the last Time, but with an Increase of Power; for he was represented as drawing tormented People out of Purgatory with his knotted Cord, which, as you may well imagine, the poor Souls catched at, and took hold of very eagerly. At length came a gorgeous Friar under a splendid Canopy, bearing in his Hand a Piece of the Holy Cross. After him followed two more little winged Boys, and then a long Train of fat and well-favoured Franciscans with their Calceis Fenestratis, as Erasmus calls them; and so the Procession ended.

Methinks I hear you say it is full Time. And so say I. For as the Sight itself disgusted me, so I am persuaded the bare Narration of it, though ever so short, cannot be very pleasant to you, who I know abhor every thing that favours of Superstition and Idolatry. We will therefore take our Leave of St Francis, whose Procession was in the Day-time; but I must tell you it is only to inform you of another of a

much

much more awful and shocking Nature, which I saw afterwards by Night. It was about Ten o'Clock, when being deeply engaged in Conversation with my kind Host, in came an Englishman, and told me in all haste, that he had seen a Train of near two hundred Penitents passing along, and that in all Probability I might be gratified with the same Sight, if I hastened to a Place where he would conduct me. I very readily obeyed the Summons, and, as Curiosity quickned my Pace, we soon came up with some of those poor Creatures, who were then making a Halt, and kneeling in the Street, whilst a Friar from a high Cross, with an Image of our LORD crucified in his Hand, was preaching to them and the Populace, with great Vehemence. Sermon being ended, the Penitents, who had already been preached to, went forwards, and several Companies followed after, with their respective preaching Friars at their Head, bearing Crucifixes. These they pointed to, and brandished frequently, and the Hearers as frequently beat their Breasts and clapped their Cheeks. At proper Pauses they stooped and prayed ; and

and one of them, more zealous than the rest, before the King's Palace, sounded out the word Penitentia through a speaking Trumpet. The Penitents themselves were clothed and covered with white linen Vestments, only Holes were made for their Eyes to peep out at. All were bare-footed, and all had long heavy Chains fastened to their Ankles, which, when dragged along the Street, made a dismal rattling. But though alike in Dress, yet in other Respects there was great Variety amongst them; for some carried great Stones on their Backs, and others dead Mens Bones and Skulls in their Hands; some bore large and seemingly very heavy Crosses upon their Shoulders, whilst others had their Arms extended quite wide, or carried a Bow full of Swords with the Points downwards. Most of them whipped and lashed themselves, some with Cords, and others with flat Bits of Iron. It being a Moonshine Night, I could see them quite well; and indeed some of them struck so hard, that I perceived that their Backs (left bare on purpose to be flogged) were quite red, and swoln very much by the Violence and Re-  
petition

petition of the Blows. Had my dear Friend been there, he would have joined with me in saying, that the whole Scene was horrible; so horrible, that, being informed it was to be continued till Morning, I was glad to return from whence I came, about Midnight. Had you been with me, I know you would have joined in praising and gratefully adoring the **LORD** of all Lords, not only for the great Wonder of the Reformation, but also for that glorious Deliverance wrought out for us, in stopping of our late unnatural Rebellion. O with what a mighty Spirit and Power from on high, must Luther, Calvin, Melancthon, Zuinglius, and those glorious Reformers, be necessarily endued with, who dared first openly to oppose and stem such a Torrent of Superstition and Spiritual Tyranny! And what Gratitude owe we to Him, who, under **GOD**, was instrumental in saving us from the Return of such spiritual Slavery, and such blind Obedience to a Papal Power! To have had a Cardinal for our King; a Cardinal, if not born, yet from his Infancy nursed up at Rome; a Cardinal, one of

whose

whose Sons is advanced to the same Ecclesiastical Dignity, and both under the strongest Obligations to support the Interest of that Church, whose Superstitions as well as political State Principles, they have sucked in and imbibed even from their Infancy. But, blessed be GOD, the Snare is broken; and we are delivered. O for Protestant Practices to be added to Protestant Principles! O for an obediential Acknowledgment to the ever-blessed GOD for our repeated Deliverances! But alas! Pardon me, my dear Friend, I stop to weep; adieu; I cannot enlarge; but, leaving you to guess from what Source my Tears flow, I must hasten to subscribe myself,

My dear Sir,

Yours most cordially

In our Blessed LORD.

L E T -



## LETTER III.

LISBON, March, 1754.

My dear Friend,

PROVIDENCE still detains us at Lisbon, and therefore I know you will be enquiring what more News from thence? Truly, as extraordinary as ever; for I have now seen the Solemnities of a Holy Thursday, which is a very high Day in this Metropolis, and particularly remarkable for the grand Illuminations of the Churches, and the King's washing twelve poor Mens Feet. Through the Interest of a Friend I got Admittance into the Gallery where the Ceremony was performed. It was large, and hung with Tapestry; one Piece of which represented the humble JESUS washing the Feet of his Disciples. Before this, upon a small Eminence, sat twelve Men in black. At the upper End, and several other Parts of the

Gallery,

Gallery, were Sideboards of Gold and Silver large Basons and Ewers most curiously wrought; and near these a large Table covered with a Variety of Dishes, all cold, set off and garnished after the Portuguese Fashion. Public high Mass being over, his Majesty came in, attended with his Nobles, who seemed to me to look like so many Roman Senators. The very Act of washing their Feet, I did not get in time enough to see; but that being ended, several of the young Noblemen served up the Dishes to the King's Brother and Uncles: These again handed them to his Majesty, who gave, I think, twelve of them in all to each poor Man. Every thing was carried on with a great deal of Decency and good Humour. The young Noblemen served very chearfully, their Seniors looked quite pleased, and the King and his royal Relations behaved in a very polite, easy manner. Upon the whole, though, as you may easily guess, it was not an exact Copy of the Tapestry, yet, as the poor Mens Clothes and Food, when fold, came to about ten Moidores, and as there was little Mixture of Superstition in it, I cannot say but I was as well pleased with

any Morning's Entertainment as with any thing I had met with since my Arrival. I believe the whole took up near two Hours.

After Dinner we went to see the Churches; but the Magnificence and Sumptuousness of the Furniture, on this Occasion, cannot well be expressed. Many of them were hung with purple Damask trimmed with Gold. In one of them there was a solid silver Altar of several Yards Circumference, and near twelve Steps high: And in another a gold one still more magnificent, of about the same Dimensions; its Basis was studded with many precious Stones, and near the Top were placed silver Images in Representation of Angels: Each Step was filled with large silver Candlesticks, with Wax-tapers in them, which, going up by a regular Ascent till they formed themselves into a Pyramid, made a most glittering and splendid Blaze. The great Altars also of the other Churches were illuminated most profusely, and silver Pots of artificial Flowers, with a large Wax-taper between each, were fixed all round several of them. Between these were large Paintings in black and white, representing the different Parts of our Saviour's Passion: And, in short,

all was so magnificently, so superstitiously grand, that I am persuaded several thousands of Pounds would not defray the Expences of this one Day. Go which way you would, nothing was to be seen but Illuminations within, and Hurry without; for all Persons, the Crowned Heads themselves not excepted, are obliged on this Day to visit seven Churches or Altars, in Imitation, as is supposed, of our L O R D 's being hurried from one Tribunal to another, before he was condemned to be hung upon the Cross. I saw the Queen pass by in great State to visit three of them. Velvet Cushions were carried before her Majesty, and Boards laid along the Streets for Herself and Retinue to walk upon. Guards attended before and behind, and thousands of Spectators stood on each Side to gaze at them as they passed along. Being desirous of seeing the Manner of their Entrance, we got into the last Church before they came. It was that of St Domingo, where was the gold Altar before mentioned, and at which her Majesty and Train knelt about a Quarter of an Hour. All the while the Dominican Friars sung most surprisingly sweet. But as I stood near the

Altar, over against the great Door, I must confess my very inmost Soul was struck with a secret Horror, when, upon looking up, I saw, over the Front of the great Window of the Church, the Heads of many hundred Jews, painted on Canvas, who had been condemned (by what they call the Holy Inquisition) and carried out from that Church to be burnt. Strange way this, of compelling People to come in! Such was not thy Method, O meek and compassionate Lamb of GOD! Thou camest not to destroy Mens Lives, but to save them. But Bigotry is as cruel as the Grave; it knows no Remorse: From all its bitter and dire Effects, good LORD deliver us.

But to return to the Queen: Having performed her Devotions, she departed, and went in a Coach of State, I believe, directly from the Church to her Palace, and without doubt sufficiently fatigued. For, besides walking through the Streets to the several Churches, her Majesty also, and the Princesses, had been engaged in waiting upon, and washing the Feet of twelve poor Women, in as public a Manner as the King. In our Walk home we met his  
Majesty

Majesty with his Brother and two Uncles, attended only with a few Noblemen in black Velvet, and a few Guards without Halberts. I suppose he was returning from his last Church, and, as one may well imagine, equally fatigued with his royal Consort and Daughters.

When Church and State thus combine to be nursing Fathers and nursing Mothers to Superstition, is it any Wonder that its Credit and Influence is so diffusive among the Populace? O Britain! Britain! hadst thou but Zeal proportionable to thy Knowledge, and inward Purity adequate to the Simplicity of thy external Worship, in what a happy and god-like Situation wouldest thou be! Here I could weep again. Again I leave you to guess the Cause; and if I can send you one more Letter of a like Nature, before we leave this Place, it is all you must expect from,

My dear Friend,

Yours most assuredly

In our glorious HEAD.

## LETTER IV.

LISBON, April 13, 1754.

My dear Friend,

AFTER the News sent you in my last, I thought our Lisbon Correspondence would entirely have been put a Stop to. For upon returning to my Lodgings, (as weary I believe as others that had been running from Church to Church all Day) Word was sent me, that our Ship would certainly fail next Morning. This News, I own, was not altogether agreeable to me, because I wanted to see the Conclusion of the Lent Solemnities. However, I made ready; and having dispatched my private Affairs over-night, was conducted very early in the Morning, by my kind Host, down to Bellem, where the Ship lay. We parted. The Wind promised to be fair; but dying away, I very eagerly went ashore once more. But how was the Scene changed! Before, all used to be Noise and Hurry;

Hurry; now, all was hushed and shut up in the most awful and profound Silence. No Clock or Bell had been heard since Yesterday Noon, and scarce a Person was to be seen in the Street all the way to Lisbon. About Two in the Afternoon we got to the Place where (I had heard some Days ago) an extraordinary Scene was to be exhibited. Can you guess what it was? Perhaps not. Why then I will tell you. " It was the Crucifixion of the Son of G O D, represented partly by dumb Images, and partly by living Persons, in a large Church belonging to the Convent of St De Beato." Several thousands crowded into it; some of which, as I was told, had been waiting there ever since Six in the Morning. Through the kind Interposition and Assistance of a Protestant or two, I was not only admitted into the Church, but was very commodiously situated to view the whole Performance. We had not waited long before the Curtain was drawn up. Immediately, upon a high Scaffold, hung in the Front with black Bays, and behind with silk purple Damask laced with Gold, was exhibited to our View an Image of the L O R D J E S U S at full Length, crowned with

with Thorns, and nailed on a Cross, between two Figures of like Dimensions, representing the two Thieves.<sup>10</sup> At a little Distance, on the right Hand, was placed an Image of the Virgin Mary, in plain long Ruffles, and a kind of Widow-weeds. Her Veil was purple Silk, and she had a wire Glory round her Head. At the Foot of the Cross lay, in a mournful pensive Posture, a living Man, dressed in Woman's Clothes, who personated Mary Magdalen; and not far off stood a young Man, in Imitation of the beloved Disciple. He was dressed in a loose green silk Vesture, and Bob-wig. His eyes were fixed on the Cross, and his two Hands a little extended. On each Side, near the Front of the Stage, stood two Centinels in Buff, with formidable Caps, and long Beards; and directly in the Front stood another yet more formidable, with a large Target in his Hand. We may suppose him to be the Roman Centurion. To complete the Scene, from behind the purple Hangings came out about twenty little purple-vested winged Boys, two by two, each bearing a lighted Wax-taper in his Hand, and a crimson and gold Cap on his Head. At their Entrance upon

upon the Stage they gently bowed their Heads to the Spectators, then kneeled and made Obeisance, first to the Image on the Cross, and then to that of the Virgin Mary. When risen, they bowed to each other, and then took their respective Places over-against one another, on Steps assigned for them at the Front of the Stage. Opposite to this, at a few Yards distance, stood a black Friar, in a Pulpit hung in Mourning. For a while he paused, and then, breaking Silence, gradually lifted up his Voice till it was extended to a pretty high Pitch, though I think scarce high enough for so large an Auditory. After he had proceeded in his Discourse about a Quarter of an Hour, a confused Noise was heard near the front great Door; and, upon turning my Head, I saw four long-bearded Men; two of which carried a Ladder on their Shoulders, and after them followed two more with large gilt Dishes in their Hands, full of Linen, Spices, &c. These, as I imagined, were the Representatives of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea. On a Signal given from the Pulpit, they advanced towards the Steps of the Scaffold. But upon their very first attempting to mount it,

it, at the watchful Centurion's Nod, the observant Soldiers made a Pass at them, and presented the Points of their Javelins directly to their Breasts. They are repulsed. Upon this a Letter from Pilate is produced. The Centurion reads it, shakes his Head, and, with Looks that bespoke a forced Compliance, beckons to the Centinels to withdraw their Arms. Leave being thus obtained, they ascend ; and having paid their Homage, by kneeling first to the Image on the Cross, and then to the Virgin Mary, they retired to the Back of the Stage. Still the Preacher continued declaiming, or rather, as was said, explaining the mournful Scene. Magdalen persists in wringing her Hands, and variously expressing her personated Sorrow ; whilst John (seemingly regardless of all besides) stood gazing on the crucified Figure. By this time it was near Three o'Clock, and therefore proper for the Scene to begin to close. The Ladders are ascended, the Superscription and Crown of Thorns taken off, long white Rollers put round the Arms of the Image, and then the Nails knocked out which fastened the Hands and Feet. Here Mary Magdalen looks most languishing, and

John,

John, if possible, stands more Thunder-struck than before. The Orator lifts up his Voice, and almost all the Hearers expressed Concern by weeping, beating their Breasts, and smiting their Cheeks. At length the Body is gently let down. Magdalen eyes it, and, gradually rising, receives the Feet into her wide-spread Handkerchief; whilst John, (who hitherto stood motionless like a Statue) as the Body came nearer the Ground, with an Eagerness that bespoke the Intense Affection of a sympathizing Friend, runs towards the Cross, seizes the upper Part of it into his clasping Arms, and, with his disguised Fellow-mourner, helps to bear it away. And here the Play should end, was I not afraid you would be angry with me if I did not give you an Account of the last Act, by telling you what became of the Corps after it was taken down. Great Preparations were made for its Interment. It was wrapped in Linen and Spices, &c. and being laid upon a Bier richly hung, was afterwards carried round the Church-yard in grand Procession. The Image of the Virgin Mary was chief Mourner, and John and Magdalen, with a whole Troop of Friars with Wax-tapers in their

their Hands, followed after. Determined to see the whole, I waited its Return, and in about a Quarter of an Hour the Corps was brought in, and deposited in an open Sepulchre prepared for the Purpose; but not before a Priest, accompanied by several of the same Order in splendid Vestments, had perfumed it with Incense, sung to, and kneeled before it. John and Magdalen attended the Obsequies; but the Image of the Virgin Mary was carried away and placed upon the Front of the Stage, in order to be kissed, adored, and worshipped by the People. This I saw them do with the utmost Eagerness and Reverence. And thus ended this Good-Friday's Tragi-comical, superstitious, idolatrous Droll. A Droll, which whilst I saw, as well as now whilst I am describing it, excited in me a high Indignation. Surely thought I, whilst attending on such a Scene of Mock Devotion, if ever, now is the dear Lord Jesus crucified afresh; and I could then, and even now, think of no other Plea for the poor beguiled Devotees, than that which suffering Innocence put up himself for his Enemies, when actually hanging upon the Cross, viz. " Father, forgive them, for  
 " they

“ they know not what they do.” There was but one thing wanting to raise one’s Resentment to the highest Pitch, and that was for one of the Soldiers to have pierced the Side of the Image upon the Cross. This in all Probability you have heard hath been actually done in other Places, and with a little more Art might, I think, have been performed here. Doubtless it would have afforded the Preacher as good, if not a better Opportunity of working upon the Passions of his Auditory, than the taking down the Superscription and Crown of Thorns, and wiping the Head with a blooded Cloth, and afterwards exposing it to the View of the People ; all which I saw done before the Body was let down. But alas ! my dear Friend, how mean is that Eloquence, and how entirely destitute of the Demonstration of the Spirit, and of a divine Power, must that Oratory necessarily be, that stands in need of such a Train of superstitious Pageantry to render it impressive ! Think you, my dear Friend, that the Apostle Paul used or needed any such Artifices to excite the Passions of the People of Galatia ; amongst whom, as he himself informs us, “ Jesus Christ was

D

“ crucified,

“ crucified, and evidently set forth?” But thus it is, and thus it will be, when Simplicity and Spirituality are banished from our religious Offices, and Artifice and Idolatry seated in their room. I am well aware that the Romanists deny the Charge of Idolatry; but after having seen what I have seen this Day, as well as at sundry other Times since my Arrival here, I cannot help thinking but a Person must be capable of making more than metaphysical Distinctions, and deal in very abstract Ideas indeed, fairly to evade the Charge. If “ weighed in the Balance of the Sanctuary,” I am positive the Scale must turn on the Protestant Side. But such a Balance these poor People are not permitted to make use of! Doth not your Heart bleed for them? Mine doth I am sure, and I believe would do so more and more, was I to stay longer, and see what they call their Hallelujah and grand Devotions on Easter Day. But that Scene is denied me. The Wind is fair, and I must away. Follow me with your Prayers, and believe me to be,

7 JU 66  
My dear Friend,

Yours most affectionately

In our common REDEEMER.